



More than 1,000 suppliers and corporate representatives attended MBOD last year and MBOD 2012 promises to attract an even larger crowd.

## Join us at MBOD 2012 and jump-start your business

A workshop by Google on how to make the most of the internet to promote business, the chance to pitch your business via video conferencing to corporate buyers and procurement professionals, a social media "hub," and networking opportunities with corporate representatives at a business opportunity exhibit fair are among the highlights of MBOD 2012.

SCMBDC's Minority Business Opportunity Day, which will be held February 23 at the Pacific Palms Conference Resort in Industry Hills, offers minority business enterprises (MBEs) the opportunity to meet corporate buyers and decision makers, attend informative seminars, generate new business leads and network at the business opportunity exhibit fair, and more.

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MBOD 2012 will offer the following:

- A workshop by Google representatives on how companies can effectively utilize the internet to promote their business and take advantage of cloud-based technologies to communicate within their business.
- Interviews with corporate members in-person and via video conferencing, where MBEs have an opportunity to discuss their companies' products and services with procurement professionals from major corporations. The appointments are designed to strategically match minority suppliers with buyers and decision makers in a variety of industries.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**SCMBDC Toastmasters International**

**Feb. 2, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.**

**SCMBDC Headquarters**

This learn-by-doing workshop helps participants (both seasoned and novices) hone speaking and leadership skills in a friendly and non-threatening atmosphere. Participants will learn how to pitch their product/service and think on their feet, have the opportunity to listen to guest speakers and network with other MBEs and guests. Meetings are held bi-weekly on Thursdays.

**Quick Connect**

**Mar. 1, Time TBA**

**Chevron Energy Center, Bakersfield**

This one-on-one matchmaking event connects diverse businesses with potential procurement opportunities with Chevron, State Farm, Aera Energy, KS Industries and McJunkin Red Man Corp. Appointments are limited and based on procurement needs; there is no cost to attend. Quick Connect is designed to foster

- A social media-facilitated launch pad that displays a live feed of business opportunities and other MBOD media.
- A business expo, where more than 400 corporate representatives, purchasing and procurement staff are expected to meet with business owners and provide information on how to get "in the door" with their companies.
- A panel discussion on the Billion Dollar Roundtable, which recognizes and celebrates corporations that spend more than \$1 billion annually with diverse companies, and how corporate members can build their supplier diversity programs to make it to this level (only 18 companies qualify at this level nationally). Panelists to date include representatives from Toyota and Walmart.
- A workshop on financial management by TransFirst, one of the nation's leading providers of transaction processing services.
- A Hard Hat Pavilion, where general contractors and large corporations meet with diverse businesses that provide construction-related services. Last year, more than a dozen general contractors and large corporations met 150-plus potential subcontractors.

Toyota is MBOD 2012's title sponsor. Other corporate sponsors and participants to date include: Google; AEG; American Airlines; American Honda Motor Co.; AT&T; California Water Association; Chevron Corporation; The Coca-Cola Company; ConocoPhillips; Fluor Enterprises; KVCR; MBE Magazine; Northrop Grumman; Port of Long Beach; SBA; Southern California Edison; Southern California Gas Company; Southwest Gas; The Walt Disney Company; TransFirst; Walmart, and Wells Fargo.

MBOD 2012 will be held from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Register online at [www.scmbdc.org](http://www.scmbdc.org). The cost is \$65 per person from Jan. 1 through Feb. 19, and \$95 onsite the day of the event. When registering online, suppliers can indicate their interest in the matchmaking appointments (these are based on the procurement needs of participating corporations and are not guaranteed).

Visit [www.scmbdc.org](http://www.scmbdc.org) for information on exhibitor fees and sponsorships. For more information, contact Lauren Knight at [lknight@scmbdc.org](mailto:lknight@scmbdc.org), or (213) 689-6940.

business relationships between diverse suppliers and large corporations. For more information, contact Fernando Velasquez at 213-689-6968, or [fvelasquez@scmbdc.org](mailto:fvelasquez@scmbdc.org).

For more information about these and other events, visit [www.scmbdc.org](http://www.scmbdc.org)



**MBOD2012**  
MINORITY BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY DAY

TITLE SPONSOR

**TOYOTA**

**Save the date - Feb. 23**

Minority Business Opportunity Day (MBOD) exposes minority businesses to progressive workshops and seminars that optimize business potential and/or enhance business growth. It also provides valuable opportunities for MBEs to network with SCMBDC member corporations who value MBOD as a forum for meeting new suppliers and vendors. MBOD 2012 will take place February 23 at the Pacific Palms Conference Resort in the City of Industry. For more details, contact Lauren Knight at [lknight@scmbdc.org](mailto:lknight@scmbdc.org).

**How to get the most out of MBOD**



So you're registered to attend SCMBDC's Minority Business Opportunity Day on Feb. 23. Whatever you do, don't simply show up, hand out a few business cards, pick up some trinkets, and leave early to beat the traffic.

Instead, use MBOD as an opportunity to generate new business leads, meet new people and create mutually beneficial business relationships,

learn how to get in with major corporations, gain insights about business trends, and more.

"Minority business owners that are serious about making connections and taking their business to the next level have a strategy to make the most of their day at MBOD," according to Virginia Gomez, the council's interim president. "It's the one day they have access to corporate representatives and procurement professionals from many different companies so they want to be prepared to do business."

Here are some tips to make the most out of your day at MBOD:

- Check SCMBDC's website to see which companies will be attending MBOD. Select those that you specifically want to introduce to your company.
- Show up early and stay for all of the day's offerings. Pay attention to the schedule of events and attend the morning workshops and business expo.
- Once you arrive, review the program, and add any companies that were not listed on SCMBDC's website to the companies you wish to focus on.
- In giving your one-minute pitch, be able to describe your products and services succinctly and clearly; gauge your pitch toward how you can be a strategic partner and assist your potential client in meeting their objectives. Practice your speech and be prepared to deliver it several times at MBOD.
- Wear professional business attire, have a positive attitude and be passionate about your business. Don't complain about the economy or business - stay upbeat.
- Do not use the valuable time you have in finding out if the company needs your product/service -- come prepared with the knowledge of what the company procures. At most corporate websites, they have a procurement link; know what upcoming bid opportunities are available and address how your company meets their needs.
- Exchange business cards with corporate representatives and other attendees. If someone asks for your card, ask for theirs.
- Remember to follow-up with people you met and summarize your capabilities. Also, ask if there's someone else you should contact at the company.

By following these tips, you're more likely to create new business opportunities and the day will have been time well spent. Go to [scmbdc.org](http://scmbdc.org) for more information and business resources.

## SCMBDC joins Bridges to Business Success

Community Development



SCMBDC has partnered with Citi Community Development, MBDA Business Center-Los Angeles, USC, the City of Los Angeles Mayor's Office of Economic & Business Policy,

SBA SCORE, and three ethnic minority chambers on an advanced business training program focused on building the capacity of minority small business owners.

The Bridges to Business Success (B2BS) Program, which launched Jan. 21, is aimed at helping minority small business owners become contract-ready and be prepared to secure and manage new contracting opportunities. The initial pilot program is targeted to the real estate asset management industry, including construction contractors, property managers and others who were impacted by the housing downturn.

The program consists of an eight-week training program, totaling 32 hours, and will include: a personalized procurement strategy for each business with targeted goals, certifications, contracts and a timeline; technical assistance and coaching; videotaped mock presentations/interviews with a panel of procurement specialists, and a matchmaking event with actual contracting opportunities with procurement representatives from Citi, USC, and the City of Los Angeles. MBEs will also have access to capital resources that will allow for the successful delivery and fulfillment of contractual obligations.

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Program participants also will receive technical assistance from SCMBDC to secure minority business certification, with the \$350 cost per minority business enterprise (MBE) sponsored by Citi. Additionally, program graduates will qualify for the council's Capacity Building Initiative, a program designed to increase minority businesses' capacity through resources and one-on-one coaching provided by corporate mentors.

"We're excited to be part of this innovative public/private/non-profit partnership program," according to SCMBDC's Director of Innovation Fernando Velasquez, noting the council was involved in attracting B2BS participants by promoting the program among its members, along with the Latino Business Chamber of Greater LA, Black Business Association, and Asian Business Association.

"Not only will participants develop new skills to help their businesses grow, but they'll also have an opportunity to vie for actual contracts," he adds. "While there are no guarantees, through this program, participants will have a greater chance of winning contracts and completing them on time and on budget."

## **MBE spotlight: Vobecky Enterprises Adept at offering diverse services**



*Bianca Vobecky*

**Background:** Some companies offer general contractor and construction services while others handle logistics management. But Glendora, Calif.-based Vobecky Enterprises is adept at handling both.

The company is able to provide a range of diverse services due to founder Bianca Vobecky's expertise and experience in construction and logistics management. Vobecky, who started the company in 2006, spent 10 years working for engineering and construction firms, including Parsons Engineering, Bobis Construction and Jacobs Construction.

To keep cash flowing to the business during its launch, Vobecky took a sales rep job for a freight company, where she handled

logistics for trucking deliveries for clients. Eventually, her sales connections led her to construction projects. Today, about 65% of Vobecky Enterprises' work is in construction and 35% is in logistics management.

The company, which has seven employees, counts the U.S. Army, U.S. Forest Service, Sempra Energy, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and AEG among its clients. Projects have included performing general construction services as well as handling logistics ranging from delivering fireproofing material for a hotel project to trucking in 200 truckloads of steel.

**Certification benefits:** Vobecky was introduced to SCMBDC in 2006 when she accepted an invitation to attend Minority Business Opportunity Day (MBOD). "I learned about the council's services at MBOD and as soon as I got home, I applied for certification," she says.

"Certification," she adds, "helped me land my first contract as a subcontractor to a demolition company doing work for Los Angeles World Airport (LAWA). It opens door and allows you to meet corporate members," Vobecky says, noting a majority of the work her firm receives is with SCMBDC corporate members.

Vobecky makes it a point to attend every MBOD and take advantage of the council's services. She is a protégée in the Capacity Building Initiative, where Swinterton Builders, her mentor, has helped her develop a business plan and 2012 forecasts.

**Working in a male-dominated field:** After working for several years in the industry, Vobecky has become accustomed to being among a few women-owned firms bidding on construction contracts.

"In the beginning, your prices and results have to be better than everyone else's - you have to stand out," says Vobecky, whose company has received awards from the City of Los Angeles, National Association of Minority Contractors and U.S. Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency.

She adds, "Whenever I have an opportunity to do a job for a company for the first time, I make sure my rates are competitive and they know who I am."

## Whom to contact at SCMBDC if you need...

To better serve minority business enterprises and corporate members, the council has made some staff changes and reassignments. For the following SCMBDC programs, see contact information below:

### CERTIFICATION

**Marlene Gomez**, Director of Business Development, (213) 689-6962; [mgomez@scmbdc.org](mailto:mgomez@scmbdc.org)

**Javier Zuñiga**, Certification Specialist, (213) 689-3012; [jjuniga@scmbdc.org](mailto:jjuniga@scmbdc.org)

**Beatriz Rafael**, Certification Intern, (213) 689-6960; [brafael@scmbdc.org](mailto:brafael@scmbdc.org)

**Crystal Howard**, Certification Intern, (213) 689-6960; [choward@scmbdc.org](mailto:choward@scmbdc.org)

**Frank Guzman**, Certification Field Auditor, (323) 780-4247; [fguzman@scmbdc.org](mailto:fguzman@scmbdc.org)

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

**Fernando Velasquez**, Director of Innovation, (213) 689-6968;  
fvelasquez@scmbdc.org  
30-Second MBE  
Let's Get Federal TV  
Meet the Buyers: Online Matchmaking

**Marlene Gomez**, Director of Business Development, (213) 689-6962;  
mgomez@scmbdc.org  
Leveraging Certification  
Communication Skills LIVE!  
Electronic RFPs & Reverse Auctions  
'How to' Livestreams & Workshops  
Quick Connect: In-Person Matchmaking  
WISER Video Series  
Pepperdine University Video Series  
Business Basics

**Sarah Lee**, Designer, (213) 412-0020; slee@scmbdc.org  
Toastmasters International  
Social Media (business opportunity posts)  
Weekly Email Brief

## EVENTS

**Lauren Knight**, Director of Events, (213) 689-6940; lknight@scmbdc.org  
Minority Business Opportunity Day  
Supplier of the Year  
Leadership Award Gala  
Corporation of the Year Award  
The Power of Relationships: Making Connections and Creating Value for Businesses

## CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE

**Lauren Knight**, Director of Events, (213) 689-6940; lknight@scmbdc.org

## MBE HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

**Brisa Lopez**, Manager of Marketing and Sales, (213) 689-6961;  
blopez@scmbdc.org

## FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

**Herman Wong**, Controller, (213) 689-6934; hwong@scmbdc.org

## CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

**Virginia Gomez**, Interim President, (213) 689-6965; vgomez@scmbdc.org

## Smart tips for MBEs

### New Year's resolutions for business owners



If you're like many Americans, you've probably already made one or more resolutions in the New Year. If you're a business owner, you may have resolved to increase sales and profits. Here are a few tips to help you get there in 2012:

- Keep learning. Make a vow to learn more and expand your skills. Take a business class or read books about leadership, innovation, new technologies, etc.

- Plan and strategize. Determine your business goals and make business planning and strategy a priority.
- Keep goals front and center. Make sure employees know your goals so everyone is working toward a common effort. Discuss them at staff meetings or post them on a bulletin board.
- Network, network, network. Attend events that will provide introductions to prospective customers. You can start by attending SCMBDC's Minority Business Opportunity Day on Feb. 23 (see related stories for details).
- Get expert advice. Consider hiring a business coach or seek a mentor who can provide unbiased, neutral advice.
- Communicate with employees. Solicit feedback on how processes could be improved. Make them feel like their involved in the company's success. This builds employee loyalty and dedication over the long-term.
- Get and stay organized. Create a "to do" list every day, manage interruptions by allowing phone calls to go straight to voice mail, don't multi-task--work on one task at a time.

While the majority of people who make New Year's resolutions break them, research shows that making resolutions is useful. People who explicitly make resolutions are 10 times more likely to attain their goals than people who don't.

So the message here is to maintain your resolutions throughout the year; you and your business will be better off.

## **News briefs**

### **New laws for small businesses**

Several new laws and regulations for small businesses went into effect on Jan. 1 and include new mandates concerning employees as well as federal taxes. Here's a summary of a few of them:

**Federal taxes:** There is now a decrease in how much of the total cost of new equipment a business can deduct upfront on its tax return. This includes computers, machinery and vehicles. The deduction drops to \$125,000 from \$500,000. In addition, the Internal Revenue Service has a new tool to catch businesses that don't report all their sales income. In 2012, the IRS requires credit card processing companies and third-party payment services, such as PayPal, to report how much money they handle for merchants. The new rule applies to businesses that process more than \$20,000 in payments in a year and have more than 200 transactions.

**Accessibility:** Some rules under the Americans With Disabilities Act will go into effect March 15. One rule will require new or altered buildings to have light switches and thermostats mounted 48 inches above the floor (the old rule was 54 inches).

**State laws:** As of January, employers will be banned from checking the credit of non-managerial employees and job applicants. There are some exceptions, including employees who handle confidential information. Businesses are also now required to provide new hires with additional, more detailed information about their pay and other matters, including contact information for workers' compensation. In addition, a new law increases the penalty for misclassifying an employee as an independent contractor.

## Healthcare costs rising

A recent health benefits survey revealed that fewer California companies offered workers health insurance last year, and the ones that did charged employees more for their coverage.

The California Employer Health Benefits Survey by the California Healthcare Foundation found that employer health insurance plans have risen 153.5% since 2002, a rate that's more than five times the increase in California's inflation rate. In the last two years alone, the proportion of state employers offering coverage to employees fell to 63% from 73%, according to the survey.

"This is a departure from previous years and could be an early sign of future changes," the foundation report noted. The data was collected between July and October 2011 in interviews with 770 private firm benefit managers.

About a quarter of employers reduced benefits or increased cost sharing for employees in 2011; 22% opted to make workers pay more of the share of the higher premiums. The survey noted that 36% of California firms said they were either "very" or "somewhat" likely to raise the amount that their staff paid in premiums in 2012.

*SCMBDC offers top-quality, affordable health insurance through its MBE Health Insurance Program. For more information, go to [www.scmbdc.org](http://www.scmbdc.org).*